

Presidential Search Committee

FIU Presidential Search Committee Meeting

March 17, 2025

FIU, Modesto A. Maidique Campus, Graham Center Ballrooms and via Zoom

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

FIU Presidential Search Committee Chair Carlos A. Duart convened the meeting of the FIU Presidential Search Committee at 9:04 AM on Monday, March 17, 2025.

General Counsel Carlos B. Castillo conducted roll call of the FIU Presidential Search Committee and verified a quorum. Present were Carlos A. Duart, *Committee Chair*; Marc D. Sarnoff, *Committee Vice Chair*; Noël C. Barengo; Francesca Casanova; Eric Eikenberg; Gerald C. Grant, Jr. (*Zoom*); Francis A. Hondal; Natasha Lowell; Albert R. Maury; Carlos A. Migoya; Jose Oliva; Yaffa Popack (*Zoom*); Claudia Puig (*joined after roll call*); Alexander Rubido; and Selcuk Uluagac.

Committee Chair Duart welcomed FIU Board of Trustees Chair Roger Tovar, Committee members, and the University community.

Committee Chair Duart welcomed Mr. R. William "Bill" Funk and Mr. Wille Funk of Funk Associates. Committee Chair Duart added that Funk Associates will assist the Committee with the search for FIU's seventh president.

2. Presidential Search Committee Charge and Introductions

FIU Board of Trustees Chair Roger Tovar indicated that, in accordance with Florida Board of Governors Regulation 1.002, he, as Chair of the FIU Board of Trustees, and in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Governors, has appointed the members to the FIU Presidential Search Committee. He thanked the members for their willingness to serve on the Committee.

Board Chair Tovar referred to the memorandum delineating the Committee's charge. He pointed out that the memorandum will also be posted on the presidential search website. He highlighted a few of the major points of the charge, specifically:

- **Scope of Search:** The Committee is tasked with conducting a presidential search process that is transparent, effective, and consistent with state law and with the priorities of the Board of Governors and FIU. The executive search firm of Funk Associates will assist the Committee during the presidential search process.
- **Estimated Timeline:** The timeline for the presidential search process began February 2025. It is anticipated that the Committee will submit by early May 2025, its recommended

unranked list of qualified applicants to the Board of Trustees, consistent with the requirements of Board of Governors Regulation 1.002.

- **Responsibilities:** Detailed responsibilities of the Search Committee are outlined in the charge memo, as well as Florida Board of Governors Regulation 1.002:
 - oversight of FIU's dedicated webpage that maintains information related to the search and a link for stakeholders to provide input;
 - establishing a calendar of public events that aligns with the estimated timeline and meeting dates of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors for purposes of the confirmation process;
 - obtaining an executive compensation analysis and using said analysis to establish a range of compensation that will be submitted to the board of trustees for approval and use by the Board of Trustees or its designee in negotiating the employment contract with the final candidate;
 - developing recommended position criteria that are consistent with the institution's mission, strategic plan and aspirational goals, which shall be approved by the Board of Trustees;
 - approving a marketing plan, that will be submitted to the Board of Trustees;
 - identifying individuals who may apply, be nominated, or recruited, taking into consideration their experience, qualifications and leadership capabilities under the position criteria to produce a pool of qualified applicants;
 - vetting applicants by, at a minimum, ensuring that available public records and online resources are checked in order to narrow the pool of qualified applicants who will be invited to participate in interviews with the Committee and that the references of candidates to be referred to the Board of Trustees are thoroughly checked;
 - determining, under the position criteria, the applicants to be interviewed by the search committee and conducting those first applicant interviews, based on the format and parameters set forth by the committee;
 - recommending an unranked list of final applicants who are qualified under the position criteria for on-campus meetings or forums with faculty, students, and other stakeholders and for consideration and on-campus interviews by the Board of Trustees, subject to the prior review and approval by the Chair of the Board of Governors. The search Committee is required to submit more than two qualified applicants, selected by a majority vote of the search Committee, to the Board of Trustees for consideration, other than in exceptional circumstances

making fulfillment of this requirement infeasible, in which case the Committee must discuss why fewer than three applicants are being recommended and whether additional applications should be considered. If more than two candidates are not coming forward, the Board of Trustees must be notified of the reason and may decline to act; and

10. informing all members of the Committee if any applicant withdraws from consideration prior to the Board of Trustees' consideration of finalists.

Board Chair Tovar commented that personally identifiable presidential applicant information must be confidential until the final stages of the search. He indicated that it is critically important that Committee members protect the confidentiality of every prospect and candidate. Board Chair Tovar added that each member of the Committee has been asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement affirming their commitment to confidentiality as provided by Florida law.

Presidential Search Committee members introduced themselves.

3. Information and Discussion Items

3.1 FIU Overview

Committee Chair Duarte commented that in just over 50 years, the site of a former airfield was transformed into a leading American university. He added that today, FIU has an incredibly talented and high achieving student population studying in over 200 majors. He remarked on top recognitions and rankings that highlight student success, research excellence, and patent production. Committee Chair Duarte noted that the University's Modesto A. Maidique Campus features a thriving student presence and all the offerings of a major research university. He added that the Biscayne Bay Campus is home to the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, marine sciences program and some initiatives of the College of Communication, Architecture + the Arts. He stated that the Wall of Wind research and testing facility is one of only eight National Science Foundation-supported experimental facilities in the country and is the largest and most powerful university research facility of its kind, capable of simulating Category 5 hurricane winds. Committee Chair Duarte indicated that the Aquarius Reef base is the only undersea research laboratory in the world. He pointed out that more than 420 student athletes compete in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1-A sports programs at FIU.

Committee Chair Duarte commented that FIU will soon host a major clinical facility in partnership with Baptist Health South Florida. He added that the new medical center will provide primary and specialty clinical health services and provide opportunities for interdisciplinary health science education for the University's academic programs in not just medicine but nursing, social work, public health and the allied health sciences. Committee Chair Duarte stated that the FIU Engineering Innovation Complex is scheduled to open in Fall 2025 and will allow state-of-the-art research labs, classrooms, student experiential learning spaces, and PET cyclotron facility. He remarked that the next phase of on-campus residence hall will house over 1,000 students and be located to the west of the Patricia and Philip Frost Art Museum. He stated that FIU's 2024-25 fiscal year operations budget total expenditures are \$1.9B.

3.2 Sunshine Law and Confidentiality Requirements

General Counsel Castillo noted that each Committee member was provided with a hard copy of the PowerPoint slides that he will be presenting. He indicated that the Sunshine Law was enacted, as reflected by Florida Supreme Court cases, to prevent public entities from engaging in closed door politics. He added that the Sunshine Law, generally, applies to all meetings of any board or commission of any State agency, including the FIU Board of Trustees and the FIU Presidential Search Committee. He commented on Sunshine Law requirements, including that all meetings that are covered by the Sunshine Law must be open, reasonable notice of the open meetings must be given, and meeting minutes must be kept.

General Counsel Castillo described what constitutes a meeting, specifically instances where two or more members of a particular committee meet to discuss or deliberate, in person or by phone, formal or casual, about a matter on which the committee might foreseeably take action. He added that as such, under the Sunshine Law, a Presidential Search Committee member cannot speak to a fellow committee member outside of a Committee meeting that has been properly noticed about a matter on which the Committee might foreseeably take action, even if doing so casually. General Counsel Castillo described consequences for noncompliance, including that penalties can range from a non-criminal infraction to criminal and other related penalties. He indicated that the Public Records Law reflects the policy of the state that all state county municipal records are open for personal inspection and copying by any person. He explained that public records include all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, etc., regardless of physical form or the means of transmission, made or received, pursuant to law, in connection with the transaction of official business. He added that this includes text and WhatsApp messages. General Counsel Castillo pointed out that personal notes are not subject to the Public Records Law so long as they are not shown to another person and are kept personal.

General Counsel Castillo commented that the Presidential Search Bill, Section 1004.098, Florida Statutes, generally keeps personally identifiable presidential applicant information confidential until, for finalists, the final stages of the search. He pointed out that the Section 1004.098 legislative history provides that “Many, if not most applicants [for president of a state university] are currently employed at another job at the time they apply and could jeopardize their current positions if it were to become known that they were seeking employment elsewhere. These exemptions from public records and public meetings requirements are needed to ensure that a search committee can avail itself of a pool of the most experienced and qualified applicants. . . .” He stated that the statute provides that “Any personal identifying information of an applicant for [P]resident of a state university...held by a state university... is confidential and exempt. . . .” Notwithstanding the foregoing, “the age, race, and gender of all applicants who met the minimum qualifications established for the position by a state university...who were considered and the personal identifying information of an applicant included in the final group of applicants for [P]resident of a state university...are no longer confidential and exempt. . . .”

General Counsel Castillo also noted that the statute provides that “Any portion of a meeting of the presidential search committee held for the purpose of identifying or vetting applicants for [P]resident of a state university . . . , including any portion of the meeting which would disclose personal identifying information of such applicants which is otherwise confidential and exempt...is

exempt . . .” General Counsel Castillo added that said portion of the meeting would be a closed or shade meeting, and stated that the statute provides that “A complete recording must be made of any portion of a meeting which is closed and any closed portion of the meeting may not be held off the record.”

General Counsel Castillo provided an overview of key takeaways and reminders. He stated that he was available to address questions that the Committee members may have regarding the foregoing as well as the non-disclosure agreement.

3.3 Search Process Overview

Committee Chair Duarte welcomed Mr. Bill Funk of Funk Associates. Mr. Funk commented on his firm’s role relating the presidential search process and work performed to-date. He remarked on active searches within the State University System of Florida. Mr. Funk added that the Committee will vet applicants and narrow the pool of qualified applicants to approximately eight (8) who will be invited to participate in interviews with the Committee. He stated that after the first-round interviews, the Presidential Search Committee will select more than two (2) finalists that they are recommending to the Board of Trustees and inviting for campus interviews.

4. Action Items: FIU Board of Trustees Action Items

5. Action Item: FIU Board of Trustees Information Item

Committee Chair Duarte requested to take the action items out of order. There were no objections from the Committee.

Action Item: FIU Board of Trustees Information Item

PSC2. Presidential Search Marketing Plan –

Mr. Funk mentioned that one of the keys to a successful presidential search is the dissemination of information in terms of the availability of a presidential position and launch of a search. He commented on external marketing efforts to-date, including electronic ads that have been placed in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *Higher Ed Jobs*. Senior Vice President for Operations and Safety and Chief of Staff Javier I. Marques remarked on internal marketing efforts to-date, such as the launch of the University’s presidential search website.

Pursuant to Florida Board of Governors Regulation, a motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Presidential Search Committee approve the marketing plan, which will be submitted to the FIU Board of Trustees.

Action Items: FIU Board of Trustees Action Items

PSC1. Presidential Position Criteria

Committee Chair Duarte explained that Florida Board of Governors Regulation requires that the Committee, assisted by Funk Associates, be responsible for developing recommended position criteria that are consistent with the institution’s mission, strategic plan, and aspirational goals, and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Funk commented that the proposed Presidential Position Criteria is an amalgamation of the University strategic plan, the mission statement, conversations with the Board leadership, surveys

that have been conducted generally throughout the University, and R1 university president positions and the descriptions of their president's duties. He added that while criteria should establish clear guidelines, said criteria should not be so restrictive that they may dampen the presidential search. Mr. Funk provided an overview of the qualifications, qualities, and characteristics that the ideal candidate for the FIU Presidency will demonstrate.

Committee members engaged in a discussion regarding the Presidential Position Criteria. Committee Vice Chair Marc D. Sarnoff commented on the importance of fundraising. Committee Chair Duarte remarked on the importance of reducing the gap in state funding. Committee member Carlos A. Migoya mentioned that the next president of FIU should be a visionary leader who believes in the University's mission, strikes the balance between research and being responsive to the needs of the community, and understands the importance of academic excellence and how to collaborate with faculty.

Pursuant to Florida Board of Governors regulation, a motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Presidential Search Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the Presidential Position Criteria.

PSC2. Range of Compensation

Committee Chair Duarte commented that Florida Board of Governors Regulation provides that the search committee will establish a range of compensation that will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval and use by the Board of Trustees or its designee in negotiating the employment contract with the final candidate.

Associate Vice President for the Division of Human Resources, Carlos A. Flores, presented the executive compensation analysis for Committee review. He remarked that the compensation packages for presidents of peer and aspirant institutions were reviewed as part of said analysis. Mr. Flores presented a presidential compensation comparison, delineating annual base salary, incentive bonus opportunities, housing and car allowances, and other major compensation components for the following Florida State University System institutions: Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of South Florida, Florida Atlantic University, and Florida International University. Mr. Flores indicated that the total compensation for said institutions, not including FIU, ranges from \$1.1M to \$2.1M. He indicated that Florida State University had the highest total presidential compensation package and Florida International University had the lowest. He described the proposed range of compensation, specifically a total compensation package ranging from \$1,825,186 as the 75th percentile to \$1,243,000 as the 25th percentile.

Committee members engaged in a discussion regarding the range of compensation. Committee members commented on the need to be mindful about the use of limited public University funds while also staying competitive in terms of its total compensation package in order to attract the best candidates. Committee members also engaged in a discussion regarding a total compensation package that prioritizes a larger annual incentive bonus opportunity.

Mr. Funk concurred with the proposed range.

Pursuant to Florida Board of Governors Regulation, a motion was made and unanimously passed that the FIU Presidential Search Committee recommend that the FIU Board of Trustees approve the range of compensation, as presented.

6. Next Steps

Committee Chair Duarte urged the Committee and University community to visit the presidential search website to submit nominations and to stay informed about the process. He stated that it is anticipated that the Committee will submit by early May 2025, its recommended unranked list of qualified applicants to the Board of Trustees, consistent with the requirements of Board of Governors Regulation 1.002.

7. New Business

No new business was raised.

8. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

With no other business, Committee Chair Carlos A. Duarte adjourned the meeting of the FIU Presidential Search Committee on Monday, March 17, 2025 at 11:01 AM.